

COMMUNITY YOUTH WORK IN CROATIA - COMBATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Nataša Koražija

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HEALTHY COUNTY

The process of change caused by decentralization was seen as an excellent opportunity for improving Public Health practices in Croatia at the County level. A »learning-by-doing« training approach appeared to be the best tool for public health capacity building and strengthening of collaboration between health policy stakeholders at the county level in order to both build knowledge and skills.

Based on Healthy Plan-it™ program (developed by Center for Disease Control and Prevention, USA) for identifying and prioritizing healthcare needs and developing plans for addressing them, and other materials, the faculty members tailored a public health capacity building »Health – Plan for it« program proposal for Croatia.

Healthy Plan-it

The program's aim is to provide guidance and assistance to counties, while introducing more effective and efficient public health policies and practice. By the end of 2001, the program was discussed with several panels: public health physicians from County and National Institutes of Public Health, county officials, health managers, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare officials. Finally, it was revised and sent for comments to the pilot group of counties.

Topics included

1. Public health management (from identification to better satisfaction of public health needs, provision of the right kind and quality of services)
2. Organizational and human resource management (improvement of personal managerial abilities, routine use and application of modern management techniques),
3. Collaboration and community participation (emphasizing the necessity of continuous consultation with the community in all stages of health policy development, and reorienting the health care and social welfare system to make them more responsive towards county specific public health needs).

The process of education

Since March 2002 till May 2003 three cohorts of Counties have completed their Modular training. The first pilot group was consisted of Dubrovačko-neretvanska, Istarska and Varaždinska county, the second group Bjelovarsko-bilogorska, Krapinsko-zagorska and Vukovarsko-srijemska county, and the third group Osječko-baranjska, Primorsko-goranska and Zagrebačka county.

Training scheme

Each cohort of counties went through the following training scheme:

- Module1 – Assessment functions
- Module2 – HealthyPlan-it
- Module3 – Policy development function
- Module4 – Assurance function

Health priority areas

Health priority areas selected by Krapinsko-Zagorska County:

1. to improve quality of drinking water
2. to reduce alcohol consumption among youth and working population
3. to reduce mortality caused by cardiovascular diseases
4. to improve health and social care for elderly
5. to prevent depopulation of the area

Plan for Health

According to the problem analysis of youth excessive drinking, various models have been presented in order to resolve the problem itself – gathering and improvement of the cooperational work of the key members in the process of youth health care on the county level as well as an active involvement of the young people themselves. Activating of the target population and its connecting has been done by the founding of the youth network of the Krapinsko-zagorska county.

GREEN ROOM

Within this project the county and the city of Zabok have offered the facility for youth gathering with the aim of a better quality for spending their free time. The programme schedule has been made in association with the youth network (individual programmes and projects like musical, computer, artistic and many others in the categories of their interests whose purpose is to gather young people) as well as the financial resources which will fullfill the centre's work.

The overall objective

The active involvement of a large number of young people in the programs and projects of quality leisure time.

Creating programs and projects, volunteering in the implementation.

Specific objectives

- define a working group
- develop methods to attract young people into the Green room
- work on the recognition of the area and Networks define programs
- develop programs and projects
- establish new partnerships
- record number of activities
- record number of people involved in activities
- to lobby for funds
- development of web and facebook profiles

Associates

1. Youth Network KZŽ
2. Center for Drug Adiction Prevention
3. Other services in Public Health
4. other NGOs
5. schools
6. Cities and Municipalities
7. religious organizations
8. media
9. various informal group...

Working team

1. Coordinator of Youth Network KZC
2. Activists (Network)
3. A representative of the County and City of Zabok
4. Associate of Department for social care, City of Zabok
5. Coordinator of the Center for Drug Adiction Prevention
6. Representatives of local media (Radio Zabok, Radio Kaj,...)

Expected contribution to the project

1. Dislocation of youth from high-risk places for the development of antisocial behavior in a place where they can express positive behaviour
2. The change from a passive to an active user access (through the various initiatives and the implementation of projects and programs).
3. More information about the needs of young people and the realization of projects
4. Redefining their life values

Expected difficulties

- Possible needed long-term to achieve recognition of Green room and Youth Network
- Possibility of resistance of leading individuals in informal groups of young people that can stop a number of young people to start using the Green room and develop positive life style
- Unstable support of local policy
- Uncertain financial sustainability
- Rooted passivity of many young

Financing sources

125.880,00 kn

- Krapinsko-zagorska County
- City Zabok and associated municipalities
- EU Funds
- Resources ministries
- Donations

Evaluation

1. Process evaluation
2. Impact evaluation

Some pictures...



Some pictures



Some pictures



Some pictures



Some pictures



Some pictures



Some pictures



New look of the Green room...

... new floor, new
furniture, new kitchen,
new bathroom, new
office, new gallery...



Activities...



Activities...



...poster for the
Green room...

Still in use...



**Imaš
snove?**

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Zabok, trg već neki, tel. 123 456 789

Some results of the project

Until the opening of this centre, there has not been a facility which offered any place for young people to gather and spend their free time. In the period from March 2010. till February 2012, the facility itself has had 7333 working hours and 5400 participants have gone through 19 different activities of programmes, projects that were created in this project.

Accepting the global aims for health improvement, strategic planning at the local level and intersector cooperation in the realisation of planned intervention in which young people have taken their's role in society actively and have nurished healthy lifestyles are of great importance as an experience of a good practise upon which the build of system intervention may be done in the future.

And more...

During the project, some members of youth network got an employment or became members of important councils in their city and county.

This project is valuable example of community youth work in Croatia that helps in combating social and economic exclusion.

Literature:

- *Krapinsko – zagorska županija, Slika zdravlja Krapinsko – zagorske županije, dostupno na stranici <http://www.kr-zag-zupanija.hr/>, (datum pristupa: 20.01.2010.)*
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- *“Counties Selecting Public Health Priorities –a »Bottom-up« Approach (Croatian Experience)”, Selma Šogorić, Tea Vukušić Rukavina, Ognjen Brborović, Andro Vlahušić, Nino Žganec, Stjepan Orešković, [Collegium Antropologicum, Vol.29 No.1 Lipanj 2005.](#)*